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ABSTRACT

Demographic predictions indicate that by the end of this century only 15% of new entrants to the workforce will be white males, compared to 47% in 1985. Executives, as well as academic administrators, are being forced to learn how to manage a diverse employee population by cultivating, strengthening, and utilizing diverse talents and skills, rather than merely providing access to new groups. The barriers that exist to integrating new team members can be overcome by understanding differences of race, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation, and social class and recognizing that different groups may approach their work differently. More specifically, the following 10 strategies can help college presidents build diverse teams: (1) insist on a diverse pool of qualified candidates for managerial positions; (2) address salary inequities; (3) adopt flexible family needs policies; (5) disseminate information about student, faculty, and staff demographics; (6) provide seminars and workshops on diversity issues; (7) celebrate diverse cultural events; (8) provide opportunities for social events that bring diverse staff members and their families together; (9) set an example by behaving more like a colleague than a boss; and (10) empower the team through retreats, training in cross-cultural communication, seminars and workshops on Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity programs, encouraging innovation and new ideas, and minimizing hierarchical structures. (Contains 21 references.) (KP)

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WHY AND HOW TO MANAGE DIVERSITY

Ruth Burgos-Sasscer

A few years ago Harry S Truman College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago, interviewed six finalists for a high level administrative position. Two of the candidates were African American, one was Latino, one was Asian American and two were Anglo Americans. Four of these candidates were women. Since Truman College serves a multi-ethnic and multi-racial urban community and has a strong affirmative action policy in place, the diversity of these finalists was not unusual. However, ending a search for an administrative position with such a diverse pool of candidates is not the rule on most college campuses.

Demographic changes in American society suggest that the phenomenon will be occurring with increasing frequency. The Hudson Institute report Workforce 2000 predicted in 1987 that by the end of this century only 15 percent of the new entrants to the workforce would be white males, compared to 47 percent in 1985. Even if the predicted percentages do not turn out to be entirely accurate, there is evidence that new candidates for jobs already are increasingly female, increasingly non-white and for the first time since World War I a growing number are immigrants.

In addition to these demographic shifts, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that between 1990 and 2000, annual growth in the U.S. workforce will slow to 1.2. percent, down from the 2 percent growth during the previous decade. Thus, whether we like it or not, ready or not, recruiting and integrating capable men and women from all backgrounds and all walks of life into the workforce is inevitable.

In light of this reality, executives are being forced to learn how to manage an employee population that is diverse in terms of gender, race, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, social class and previous work experiences. College and university presidents, for example, are beginning to ask the following questions regarding the diverse members who are gradually joining their administrative ranks: How do they fare? Do they "fit in"? Are they becoming effective team members? Are they perceived as enriching the life of the institution or as having a divisive effect? Are their skills and knowledge recognized and valued? How significant is their contribution to the achievement of institutional goals? Are they staying? As answers to these questions come in, these presidents are learning that managing diversity successfully is as challenging as it is rewarding.

Managing diversity is not Affirmative Action

They also soon realize that managing diversity is more than providing access to new groups. It is not a matter of numbers, although hiring qualified persons from a pool of candidates that

reflect the demographics of the community being served is a first step. Managing diversity has to do with cultivating, strengthening and utilizing the talents and skills of all employees so that organizational goals are achieved. "The problem" says R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., executive director of the American Institute for Managing Diversity, "is not getting them (women and minorities) in at the entry level, the problem is making better use of their potential at every level, especially in middle-management and leadership positions." (Thomas, Jr. 1990, p. 108).

Barriers to integrating the new team members

Despite the rhetoric about the benefits of diversity in management teams, evidence indicates that the newest arrivals are frequently not treated as full-fledged members of the team. One compelling reason for this phenomenon is that most people are initially uncomfortable around others who are different than themselves. The discomfort is greater when individuals harbor biases against each other. In a recent video conference on women of color in higher education, a woman college president related the following experience. She and a male representative from a community agency had spent many hours working together on the development of a budget for a special project. When they finished the job, the man commented "well, that wasn't so bad." At first she thought he was referring to the arduous task, but it turned out he meant that it was not so bad working with a woman - something, he admitted, he had never done before (Women of Color,

1993).

In general, people tend to avoid contact with those with whom they do not feel comfortable. This explains why minority and women administrators in particular complain that they often are not invited to informal gatherings where their colleagues frequently make preliminary decisions on important issues (Moses, 1989).

Another compelling reason for treating diverse individuals as marginal members of a team, is the still prevailing stereotypic assumption that intellectual competence and leadership ability are primarily attributes of white males and that all others may have achieved their positions on something other than merit. Even in academia, in predominantly white institutions, competent minorities and women are often treated as if they are exceptions rather than the rule. During meetings, for example, their ideas and recommendations are frequently ignored, while ideas introduced by white males are discussed at length and eventually adopted. This is why researchers continue to find that the participation of minorities and women in the decision making process remains more symbolic than substantive (Sandler, 1986; Moses, 1989; Carey, 1990).

Overcoming the barriers

It is no doubt easier to create a cohesive management team with individuals who share the same values and beliefs and in general behave in a similar fashion than it is to do so with a heterogeneous group. Nevertheless, the charge is to manage

qualified and talented individuals who are not the same and who do not necessarily aspire to be the same.

The newcomers to an academic administrative team may hold the same graduate degrees and perhaps have held similar professional positions, but may also dress, speak, think and behave differently than each other and than those who have been in the institution a long time. Managing diversity requires that we accept, respect and value those differences, but most important, that we learn to "recognize competence in new packages" (Fernandez, 1991, p. 47).

In the past, "assimilation" made the task of management easier. White male dominated corporations set the standards for behavior in the workplace and managing was largely a matter of enforcing those standards and rewarding those who met them best. Those few individuals whose gender or ethnic values influenced their behavior in ways that went against the grain were often deemed less than capable. This negative perception changed only if the nonconformists were willing and able to put aside their differences and behave like the dominant group. As any immigrant can testify, the process of acculturation is rarely easy and always painful, even when it is viewed as a positive goal (Thomas, Jr. 1991).

Understanding the differences

The new team members include those who may differ in age, gender, race, ethnicity, linguistic ability, physical disabilities, sexual orientation, and social class. If not

recognized and understood, these differences can be potential sources of conflict and obstacles to team building.

Let's take a brief look at a few of these diverse individuals and the groups they represent. I will discuss some of the ways they may differ from each other and from the dominant group in their working environment as well as a few theories that have been advanced to explain why these differences are perceived as problematic in the workplace.

I want to make clear, however, that the characteristics I will mention are group related and not group specific. In other words, certain characteristics may be attributed to a specific group or culture, but not all the members of that group manifest those characteristics.

Women. When women began to enter the ranks of management in noticeable (if not significant) numbers during the 1970s, they were led to believe that if they learned to behave like their male counterparts in the workplace they would "fit right in." (Hennig & Jardim, 1976; Harragan, 1977). A few tried to adjust to the male dominated corporate culture but found it was not a comfortable "fit."

One reason for this, according to Sally Helgesen (1990), author of The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leading, was that they went about their work differently than men and this difference by comparison, made them appear less efficient and less capable. The difference between the workstyles of men and women appears to be rooted in patterns of behavior developed

during childhood. During her research, Harvard University's Carol Gilligan (1982) observed that young boys always establish rules before playing any game and if someone breaks a rule, they will stop the game, render an appropriate judgment and then proceed with the game. Abiding by the rules and finishing the game seems to be more important to boys than to girls.

Girls tend to focus on relationships rather than rules when playing games. When girls play and there is a conflict, they stop the game and usually do not proceed until the relationship is mended. If the conflict is not resolved, they will simply turn to another activity.

In The Female Advantage, Helgesen (1990) points out that all over the world women perform tasks that not only are nurturing, but are also cyclical and unending. For this reason, they seem to get as much satisfaction from performing a task as from completing it. Although women accomplish many tasks, they focus on the process as much as on the finished product, something men generally do not do.

Helgesen also finds that the nature of women's work has made it easier for women than for men to adopt to various roles and to juggle many tasks at once, an asset in handling the diverse areas of management. Typically, women do not get hung up on hierarchy or on the rules of bureaucracy and are more comfortable working within a structure that encourages innovation and collaboration at all levels. While this flexible approach and team spirit are increasingly valued in the modern workplace, there still are

organizations, including higher education institutions, that retain and reward only those women who play by the rigid rules of the bureaucratic model (Sanders and Mellow, 1990).

African Americans. The different ways in which Anglo-American and African-American managers approach their work responsibilities are not always recognized as culturally rooted. One reason for this is that the values, attitudes and behavior of middle class African Americans resemble the values, attitudes and behavior of their white counterparts. As a result, both groups tend to assume they are operating according to identical conventions, when in fact they may not. Important differences exist between the two groups as a result of the inevitable impact on African Americans of being black in a white society (Romer, 1991).

For example, in a well known study on black and white styles in conflict, University of Illinois researcher, Thomas Kochman (1981) found that African Americans and Anglo Americans particularly differ in the way each group approaches problem solving. The Anglo-American culture prefers that individuals discuss various sides of an issue before arriving at a final decision. African Americans, on the other hand, tend to express an opinion early on and will change that opinion only when presented with evidence that another opinion is more valid. When African Americans insist on presenting and defending their individual opinions, Anglo Americans frequently view this behavior as confrontational. However, this may be the only way

that African Americans can make sure that their opinions are considered.

Several years ago, at a leadership development workshop for community college women, Carolyn Desjardins, Executive Director of the National Institute for Leadership Development, conducted a survey on values held by African American, Latina, and Anglo-American women. The responses of the African American women indicated that revealing the "truth" was more important to them than maintaining "peace," while the Anglo American women favored "peace" before "truth." Desjardins reports that when the participants met as a group to discuss the results of the survey, the African-American women reacted with some irritation at the idea of the Anglo women as "peace keepers" (Desjardins, 1992). When I discussed this reaction with an African-American colleague, she suggested that it may be due to the fact that the African American women perceived seeking "peace" instead of confronting "truth" as a refusal on the part of the white women to acknowledge the need to fight for change.

The fact that, unlike most Anglo Americans, African Americans have had to defend their rights and struggle for change throughout their history in this country, is not always appreciated by those who value peace before change. The failure of Anglo Americans to understand this reality and their inability to manage it, has had a negative impact on the success of African Americans in higher education administration. It has particularly affected capable African-American women, who

frequently have to set aside aspects of their gender and ethnicity in order to remain in administrative positions (Sanders & Mellow, 1990). This situation not only adversely affects African Americans but, in the long run, is detrimental to the institution because it is deprived of a valuable perspective.

Latinos. Latinos are not monolithic, but the literature and the media do not always make this important fact clear. They differ in color, degree of adaptation to the dominant culture, ties to their native culture, proficiency in English, and socio-economic levels (Nieves-Squires, 1991). The major Latino subgroups can trace their roots to geographical regions that experienced an extended period of Spanish colonial rule, which was not uniform in all the regions and accounts for regional differences. However, many racial and cultural differences are due to the social, economic and political development of the regions when the Spaniards departed. Some of the variations in the behavior of Latinos in the United States are also due to the circumstances under which they left their countries of origin (Burgos-Sasscer, 1987).

Latinos often appear clannish when they are drawn together by a common language. Most first and second generation Latinos speak Spanish and for those who are bilingual and speak without an accent this is sometimes viewed as an asset in the workplace. However, even among professionals, if a Latino speaks with an accent, some people automatically assume that they do not fully understand what is being said and that they are not

intellectually capable (Nieves-Squires, 1991).

Another commonality is that Latinos have a strong group (especially family) orientation. This poses a problem when juxtaposed with the spirit of individualism that drives most mainstream Americans. Because they believe it is up to "us" rather than "me" to solve a problem, it is common practice for Latinos to consult family and close friends before making important decisions. Yet, when Latino managers go out of their way to seek the opinion of colleagues before making important decisions, they are often perceived as not taking charge (Thomas, Jr., 1991).

Fortunately, as participatory management gains recognition as an important management tool, this Latino characteristic is being viewed as a decided strength. A recent study on Latina community college presidents concluded that the dynamic leadership abilities of these women were due in large measure to the linking of women's relational non-hierarchical modes of behavior with Hispanic community values (Knowlton, 1992).

In mainstream American society, the squeaky wheel gets the grease. In almost all of the Latino cultures, however, it is considered undignified to boast about one's achievements or to seek recognition for them. If a Latino's supervisor fails to acknowledge his or her loyalty and hard work with a commendation, promotion or salary raise, then the Latino will frequently move on (Kleiman, 1991). It is safe to assume that the reluctance of Latinos to seek recognition and the failure of administrators to

address this cultural characteristic are among the reasons why many capable Latinos are not in higher level positions in the corporate or academic workplace.

Asians. The Asian American community is also diverse, but this fact is blurred by myths that attribute uniform characteristics to all Asians, including those that are American born. These myths not only belie the truth, but they have an adverse affect on the members of this fast growing ethnic community.

One of the most persistent myths is that Asians are a "model minority" and excel in everything they do. As a result, Asian college students often do not receive needed tutoring (Suzuki, 1989) and professionals are not mentored in the workplace in ways that other groups are mentored (Thomas, Jr. 1991).

Another stereotypic assumption about Asians is that they are excellent technicians and scientists, but are not leaders. This myth not only limits their career options, but may explain their very low representation in higher education administration (Suzuki, 1989). This situation is not helped by the fact that Anglo-Americans tend not to view individuals as leaders if they are short, appear to be passive and reserved, and speak English with a heavy accent as is the case with some Asian immigrants (Thomas, Jr., 1991). It should be noted that French and German immigrants, who are short and quiet and speak with accents, are not perceived with the same negative biases (Fernandez, 1991).

The perception that Asians are not leaders is further

reenforced when Asians who have not grown up in the United States hesitate to challenge the opinions of those in authority, even when they have better ideas to offer. Southeast Asians in particular find it difficult to participate in discussions with colleagues who are identified as their superiors. With time and mentoring, however, these groups readily learn to interact "American style" (Triandis, Brislin and Hui, 1988).

Japanese corporations are well known for organizing their workers into teams at all levels. They get around the respect-for-authority issue, however, by deliberately keeping ambiguous the status or titles of the group members. It is understood that the entire group is responsible for all tasks and that decisions are a group, not an individual, responsibility. "The nail that sticks out is stomped down" is an old Japanese adage. For this reason, Japanese immigrants often have a difficult time adjusting to the recognition given for individual performance in the American workplace (Ouchi, 1981).

Native Americans. There are few Native American administrators outside of tribal colleges so there is a dearth of information about how well they fare in the Anglo American academic environment. (I would like to mention that Truman College is privileged to have a Native American in its administrative ranks - the Dean of Administrative Services.) Nevertheless, there is a growing body of literature that suggests that there are many obstacles to Native Americans becoming full partners in Anglo-American dominated academic administrative

teams.

The history and treatment of Native Americans in the United States have produced a resistance to assimilation that is stronger among Native Americans than among any other ethnic group (Fernandez, 1991). Their survival as a people depends on preserving their beliefs, customs, languages and values. For this reason, many of those who live and work in the white world periodically return to the reservation for religious ceremonies and spiritual reenforcement ("Our Voices, Our Vision," 1989).

In order for Native Americans to be viewed as effective administrators, it is important that their colleagues recognize the special gifts they bring to the workplace. Among these are time-honored strategies for encouraging cooperation and collaboration, an appreciation of spiritual values, respect for the environment, and a non-patriarchal world view (Allen, 1986). The recognition and appreciation of these contributions helps to offset the tension that some Native Americans experience as they put aside certain aspects of their culture in the course of performing their administrative responsibilities. An unpublished study of six Native American women college administrators (Warner, 1992) reveals that these women find it stressful to have to behave in ways that are considered inappropriate within their culture, as for example, having to supervise individuals who are their "elders."

Radical changes are needed

Experts agree that if the United States is to reap the

benefits of the special gifts of its increasingly diverse workforce it must provide a work environment that recognizes that individuals are different and that diversity is an advantage when it is valued, cultivated, and well managed. Creating such an environment in academic and nonacademic work settings is made difficult by a bureaucratic culture that rewards conformity and imposes a structure that penalizes openness to new ideas and flexibility. Union/management contracts and government mandated personnel laws, for example, have contributed to increased rights for workers, but are also responsible for much of the rigidity that exists in the workplace (Jamison and O'Mara, 1991).

Organizations that want to capitalize on and nurture their diversity will have to make radical changes in policies and practices, staff development programs, and organization structure. The leadership of these organizations will have to examine their own cultural and operational biases and then make a conscious effort to change the way these organizations have been dealing with differences. Clearly, there is a need for new management models and leadership styles.

The corporate model

Not surprisingly, some of the these changes are already occurring in the corporate world. If one can judge from the numbers of workshops, seminars, and publications on the subject, it is obvious that diversity management is one of the hottest trends in corporate America.

In response to competitive pressures, a new breed of

executives are behaving noticeably different than their peers. Increasingly, they are disregarding the hierarchical distinctions of title, task and department. They focus on the contributions of the members of the group rather than on the performance of one individual because they are discovering - what some ethnic groups have known all along - that tasks are best accomplished by groups of individuals who have the skills to do the job, regardless of their backgrounds or titles (Kanter, 1989; Ouichi, 1981). These new corporate leaders concur with management guru Tom Peters, that "the power of the team is so great that it is often wise to violate apparent common sense and force a team structure on almost anything" (Peters, 1987, p.364).

These corporate leaders seek and welcome diversity at all levels, but especially at the management level, because they are aware that higher quality solutions are found when decision makers view problems from different perspectives, expertise and styles (Jamieson and O'Mara, 1991; Gordon 1992). Robert Hayles, a diversity consultant to many major corporations, demonstrates this point by dividing workshop participants into several small groups, some homogeneous (all white males, for instance) and some heterogeneous (blacks, Latinos, whites, males, females, gays) and assigning them a task, such as developing a budget for a certain amount of dollars. When they finish, he has them discuss the various solutions on the basis of feasibility and creativity. Inevitably, the heterogenous groups receive the highest ratings. Hayles often mentions that a single Spanish speaking person in

the decision making loop could have saved General Motors the expense of trying to market the Chevy Nova in Mexico several years ago. The reason that car did not sell there is because in Spanish, "no va" means "won't go." (Gordon, 1992).

It is fortunate that some corporate restructuring is taking place when women and minorities are entering the workplace in increasing numbers. The flexible approaches, group orientation, linguistic skills, and bicultural perspectives of these groups are precisely what the United States needs to gain the competitive edge - and the most responsive leaders are responding accordingly!

Strategies for building management teams with diverse players in academia

In the academic as in the corporate work setting, the leadership of the chief executive officer is crucial to bringing about any kind of transformation. He or she sets the tone, the motivation and the direction of the institution (Roueche, Baker, and Rose, 1989). For this reason, in order to build management teams that fully utilize the talents and skills of their diverse members, college and university presidents must articulate a clear vision of the goals they hope to achieve. The first step in that direction should be a statement expressing their appreciation of diversity at all levels, but as a decided strength at the decision making level. Then, with input from their old and new managers, presidents should develop plans of action that reflect their commitment to the changes necessary for

achieving the desired goals.

It is in that spirit, that the following strategies are recommended:

Create the climate:

1. Insist on a diverse pool of qualified candidates for managerial positions, the pool should include women, ethnic and racial minorities, white males, and so forth;

2. Address any inequities in salaries of men, women and minorities who hold similar managerial positions;

3. Adopt policies and procedures that minimize inherent unfairness to certain groups; (for example, adopt evaluation procedures that are based only on performance and measured by criteria agreed upon by both evaluators and evaluees).

4. Adopt flexible policies to address family needs, such as those relating to maternity, parental, and caregiver leaves and child care)

5. Disseminate information about demographics of students, faculty and staff and periodic reports on status of minorities on campus;

6. Provide seminars and workshops on diversity issues, such as on: differences in workstyles, values, beliefs, behavior;

7. Celebrate events that are part of other people's culture such as national holidays and the birthdays of prominent persons;

8. Provide opportunities for social events that bring together diverse staff members and their families;

9. Set the example of behaving more as a colleague than as a

boss; (share information and power, mentor, coach, delegate).

Empower the team:

1. Hold a retreat where team members will have the opportunity to identify their own cultural biases, learn about each other's values and perspectives, and discuss how they can best work together. (A consultant may be hired to help this process).
2. Provide training in cross-cultural communication so that managers can communicate more effectively with each other and provide constructive and critical feedback to subordinates.
3. Provide seminars and workshops on how Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity programs work;
4. Encourage innovation by rewarding and implementing good new ideas regardless of who offers them;
5. Minimize hierarchical structures by eliminating functional barriers (rigid job descriptions and lines of authority) and promoting the idea of managers as facilitators;
6. Get team members not to fear change - and even to love it - by encouraging openness to new ideas, trying new ways of performing tasks, and preparing for the unexpected.

Summary and Conclusion

Men and women with very diverse backgrounds are increasingly entering the ranks of management. They are becoming members of decision making teams that are responsible for developing and achieving vital institutional goals. Their diverse talents, skills, and perspectives are particularly welcomed at a time when higher education is challenged to prepare

men and women who can respond to fast-changing national and international economic and political demands.

Academic leaders are quickly learning that team building with players who are unlike each other - and who do not necessarily want to be like each other - is not an easy task. Nevertheless, it can be done if each leader becomes what Tom Peters says all modern leaders must become: "a lover of change and preacher of vision and shared values." (1985, p.53).

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